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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. HARTZLER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 5, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable VICKY HARTZLER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Madam Speaker, I think you will note today that from both sides, the Democratic side and Republican side, there will be those of us who come to the floor to speak about bringing our troops home from Afghanistan. Friday of this week will be 10 years since we committed our troops to Afghanistan.

I would like to quote from Andrew Bacevich, in an article 2 years ago, and the title, "To Die for a Mystique":

"To apply to the Long War, the plaintive query that General David Petraeus once posed with regard to Iraq—'Tell me how this ends'—the answer is clear: No one has the foggiest idea. War has become like the changing phases of the moon. It's part of everyday existence. For American soldiers there is no end in sight."

Madam Speaker, that also applies to Afghanistan. Ten years later, so many have died, so many have been wounded.

I say to the House with humility and regret that I have signed over 10,400 letters to the immediate and extended families of the fallen from both Iraq and Afghanistan. Obviously, the majority of letters now are to the families of those who have been killed in Afghanistan.

Poll after poll has shown that the American people in large percentages want our troops home now. This number of people continues to grow as the number of dead and wounded increases.

Madam Speaker, beside me is a poster of a young Army couple where the husband has lost both legs and an arm. How many more have to give their lives, their minds, and their bodies for a corrupt Afghan leader named Karzai?

I encourage the people of this country to put pressure on Congress, especially the Republican leadership, by calling their Members of Congress and telling them to bring our troops home before the 2015 deadline.

Why do I say 2015? I will quote Secretary Gates as he appeared before the Armed Services Committee in February of this year.

Secretary Gates: "That is why we believe that beginning in fiscal year 2015, the United States can, with minimal risk, begin reducing Army active duty end strength by 27,000 and the Marine Corps by somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000. These projections assume that the number of troops in Afghanistan would be significantly reduced by the end of 2014"—by the end of 2014—"in ac-

cordance with President Obama's strategy."

Madam Speaker, the problem there is that 2014 becomes 2015, 2015 becomes 2016. How many more have to die? How many more have to lose legs and arms and try to live the rest of their lives in that kind of situation?

Madam Speaker, I learned just recently that the Chinese are in Afghanistan buying copper, and this soldier told me that his unit was notified that the Chinese needed protection. How crazy is crazy? And our young men and women are over there walking the roads of Afghanistan.

American people, join those of us in Congress in both parties. Let's bring them home now, not 2015.

Madam Speaker, as I always close on the floor and I will close again today, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God in His loving arms to hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. I ask God to please bless the House and Senate that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for His people. And I will ask God to give wisdom, strength, and courage to President Obama that he will do what is right in the eyes of God for God's people.

And I close by asking three times, God please, God please, God please continue to bless America.

TEN YEARS OF WAR IN AFGHANISTAN: THE COSTS ARE TOO HIGH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, on Sunday, newspapers across the country reported that the total number of U.S. military deaths in Afghanistan since 2001 is 1,780. This tally may be slightly

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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